March 30, 1962

Dr. John J. Trentin
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Department of Surgery
Texas Medical Center
Houston, Texas

Dear Dr. Trentin:

Thank you for your letter of March 26, and for the manuscripts that accompanied it. I am returning the one that you asked be.

Your method of clonal isolation of lymphoid cells certainly does have many exciting implications, and it was quite a pleasure to read about it. However, I would have to back up Dr. Brown's comment on the implications of your findings for at least my own version of the clonal selection theory. You may note that it was precisely on the point of supposed continuation of hyper-mutability throughout the life of the animal that my own formulation explicitly differs from Burnet's. I suspect this is what he had in mind when he acknowledged that he had also long since modified his position. I fully agree that there may be no fundamental difference between induced tolerance and "immune paralysis". On page 6 of your discussion, you answer Dr. Brown with the suggestion that hyper-mutability should lead to autoimmunity. But I think you will find that this point was anticipated under Lemma A 6 of my theoretical paper in Science.

These remarks in no way mitigate the remarkable interest of your findings. I could not help but be fascinated also by the evidence mentioned in the discussion of the separation of different morphogenetic cell lines.

On page 4, referring to the strains of Table I, you mention an attribution to the Netherlands typing center. I don't know what Dr. Nossal must have told you, but I suspect a datum has been garbled somewhere in transit. Strain SW 685 was synthesized by transduction at the University of Wisconsin; Strains SW 736 and 760 are derived from the culture collection of the Communicable Diseases Center at Atlanta, Georgia, and Strain SW 1338 came ultimately from Dr. Nancy Atkinson.

Since Dr. Nossal's return to Melbourne we have not continued any experimental work along these lines, but I would not readily relinquish a conceptual interest in the problem of immunity.

Thank you for reacting so promptly.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

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